**Guide to doing the Case Study Report**

This assignment is based around investigating and reporting a case study of your SPP site highlighting the role of the school library and teacher librarian. The assignment is a combination of individual and group work. Individually, you will need to write a case study of your site. Then, as a group you will need to critically compare and contrast the case studies in relation to: each other, the scholarly and professional literature and to discussions on the OZTL\_NET listserve.

The full report is around 5,000-6,000 words for a group of three. This gives about 1200 words for each case study (i.e. 3 case studies), and another 2,000 words for the synthesis where you compare and contrast the three sites and relate your analysis to the literature.

**Step 1** – form a group of three or four

**Step 2 –** identify your SPP site

**Step 3** – investigate your SPP site and collect data and information for your case study. This will involve:

* **Interviewing the TL** about her/his role and responsibilities, challenges and opportunities. This will include: pedagogy, curriculum development, staff development, collaboration, literacy development, library management (Your interview questions should be based around those suggested in our Blackboard discussions and web-conferences).
* **Observing** the operation of the school library and duties of the TL
* **Drawing on other information** such as the library website, library policies, the school’s TL role statement, lesson plans/unit of work programs, library layout and displays, comments from staff and students, any other data that you can gather (eg. questionnaire)

**Step 4** – write your case study. Make sure it is focused on the role of the TL and the library. Keep other info (such as size of collection, opening hours etc) for your Portfolio. Your case study is descriptive, not analytical and in it you will not make any reference to the scholarly or professional literature (by contrast, the synthesis will be critical and analytical and will reference the literature). In the case study you must reference where you got the information from (eg direct and paraphrased quotes from the TL, policy etc). Remember what you leave out is as important as what you include!

**Step 5** – post a draft of your case study for peer feedback on the Blackboard discussion forum

**Step 6** – as a group, gather the 3 case studies together. As a group, write a synthesis of the case study that compares and contrasts them. Analyse your findings in relation to the TL standards, scholarly and professional literature and to discussions on the OZTL\_NET listserve.

**Step 7** – post full case study report to Blackboard discussion forum.

The full report will consist of 5 sections:

1. Case Study 1
2. Case Study 2
3. Case Study 3
4. Synthesis
5. References

**Advice on writing the individual Case Study**

The idea is to start each paragraph with a topic sentence that is phrased clearly as a role statement. This sentence can be very direct such as ‘The role of the library is as a central IT lab which allows blah, blah.' and ‘The TL sees her role as curriculum planner and developer’ etc. Then the rest of the paragraph will provide evidence from your observations, interview, documents etc to support the topic sentence.

Your duty to your reader is so they can see your argument without having to search for it, and your duty to yourself is to create an elegant and creative piece of writing. These two things are not mutually exclusive! But if the reader has to make an effort to see the point, then the reader will feel disengaged and not be predisposed to reading further :-(

There are lots of ways that you can write a role statement for your topic sentence. You can be very direct eg 'The role of the TL is' or 'The TL believes' etc', or you can be indirect:

* ‘At this school, there is a coordinated approach to information literacy.’
* ‘When involved in a research task, the students are given guidance from the teacher librarian and the classroom teacher.’
* ‘To ensure the library operates effectively, the teacher librarian is responsible for implementing and maintaining various library management systems and policies’.

Each paragraph should have just one main idea. If there are other ideas, move them to another paragraph or delete them. Also, if you have stuff in the paragraph that isn't related to the topic sentence, then delete it.   
It's also a good idea to have a signposting paragraph at the start of each section (ie. role of the library, role of the TL). This allows the reader to see what is coming up. Basically it's a summary of the ideas that follow. Also provide a concluding paragraph to the case study profile to neatly finish it off.

The individual Case Study is completely descriptive. It is like a journalistic report. There is no reference to the literature.

**Assessment criteria – Individual Case Study**

*Presentation of argument supported by evidence drawn from a range of sources*

* Argument is the line of reasoning developed throughout
* Evidence is the interview with TL, observations, library policies etc

*Evidence of understanding of TL roles and practices*

* The role of the TL must be explicit in every paragraph

*Effective written communication*

* Correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure
* Correct paragraph structure
* Correct citing of evidence

**Assessment criteria – Team Synthesis of Case Studies**

*Presentation of argument supported by evidence drawn from a range of sources*

* Argument is the line of reasoning developed throughout
* Evidence is the literature and information from the individual Case studies

*Application of key concepts*

* Explicit addressing of TL roles including pedagogy, curriculum development, collaboration, leadership, library management etc

*Evidence of understanding of TL roles and practices*

* The role of the TL must be explicit in every paragraph

*Effective written communication*

* Correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure
* Correct paragraph structure
* Correct citing and referencing - see Cite Write for more details – use APA style <http://www.citewrite.qut.edu.au/>

**Advice on writing in general**

**Structure**

Each paragraph should have a topic sentence which presents the central idea that is developed in the paragraph. The remainder of the paragraph should develop the idea and provide evidence to support the idea.

If you present a new idea, you should start a new paragraph.

You should not have one-sentence paragraphs. If they are one sentence they are not paragraphs, they are just a sentence. A paragraph should have several sentences. If you can’t seem to do this, then the point you are making might not be worth pursuing.

Each paragraph should be connected. Thus the last sentence in the preceding paragraph should logically progress onto the topic sentence of the net paragraph.

The paragraphs taken as a whole should develop an ARGUMENT. An argument is a line of reasoning that runs through the paper and is developed throughout the paper. By ‘developed’, I mean more points and evidence to support the argument are presented in each paragraph. Perhaps it might be useful to think of your paper as a narrative (story) where the argument is the plot development.

See the Cite Write guide for more info eg <http://www.citewrite.qut.edu.au/write/essayorg.jsp#Logical>

**Quotations**

Use direct quotations sparingly. Only use a direct quote if it is particularly elegant, or if it is an important definition or description, or if there is no other way to say it eg Information literacy is ‘a way of *learning* through engaging with information” (Lupton 2008 p. 2) . Otherwise, paraphrase.

Also, avoid using a direct quote as a topic sentence. If you do this, do it sparingly. Why? Overuse of direct quotes indicates that you don’t actually understand the concepts and theories you are presenting.

The exception to this rule is for the individual Case Study. In the case study it is advisable to use direct quotes from your mentor TL as it helps bring the case study to life.

**Writing style**

* Avoid colloquialisms
* Spell out abbreviations
* Don’t use contractions (i.e. do not use don’t)
* Avoid having a subheading for every paragraph – use broader headings and let the role statement topic sentence do the job of the sub-heading
* Use connecting words to link sentences in paragraphs and create flow eg:

*Direct extract from* [*http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/Resources/la/Lifespan%20Diversity%20First%20Assignment%202009/Connecting%20words.htm*](http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/Resources/la/Lifespan%20Diversity%20First%20Assignment%202009/Connecting%20words.htm)

*Connecting or linking words in the list below show the relationship between ideas.  Without them your essay can read like a series of ideas that appear loosely related to each other.  It is important to show the interrelationships between ideas, to demonstrate an understanding of your work.*

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| --- | --- |
| ***Relationship*** | ***Words*** |
| *time* | *soon, then, finally, previously, next, last, meanwhile, subsequently, following on from* |
| *addition* | *again, and, besides, therefore, additionally, indeed, moreover, as well* |
| *result* | *hence, therefore, consequently, so, because, then, finally, in summary, on the whole* |
| *contrast* | *however, nevertheless, yet, and yet, but, still, on the other hand, otherwise, conversely, in spite of, though, although, even so* |
| *comparison* | *similarly, likewise, correspondingly, equally, equally important, in the same way, even so* |
| *analogy or example* | *for example, for instance* |
| *summary* | *in brief, finally, in conclusion, to conclude, lastly, in summary, on the whole* |

Another list of connecting words and words to use when constructing an argument:

* in contrast, by contrast
* it should be noted, clearly, certainly, significantly, interestingly, surprisingly, notably, it is of interest, in fact, indeed, alternatively
* for instance, for example, such as, as a result, possibly, apparently, perhaps, usually, probably, generally, conversely, nonetheless, nevertheless, how, then
* as will be seen, as I will show, as has been noted, as already noted, as has been discussed
* therefore, further, furthermore, for this reason, thus, hence, in addition, consequently, subsequently, however, similarly, likewise, correspondingly, equally,
* exemplified, typified, represented, illustrated, epitomised, characterised
* comprises, includes, encompasses, involves, contains, covers
* firstly, secondly etc, a further issue, next, finally
* arguably, evidently, seemingly, it would seem
* alternatively, aforementioned
* Lupton argues, Lupton claims, Lupton explains, Lupton suggests...

**Advice from Learning Hubbers S1 2010 on writing the Synthesis**

**NB –Case Study Report was called the Profile Report in previous semesters**

Early in the semester we all met and established dates by which time we wanted certain aspects of the assignment completed eg questions, information collection, drafting of profile etc.

We met to discuss how we were going to go about compiling the synthesis.  We each took a separate section.  One group member had classified the research into the various standards areas and the notes from the research were distributed to the person completing that section.

When we had completed the synthesis sections we emailed these to each other and then met again.  It was at this meeting that we compiled the feedback from Mandy about her expectations of the section and almost re-wrote the entire synthesis together!!!  We ended up doing this because our approach was not what was expected.

I think setting those dates early on really helped us to focus.  We also left almost 2 weeks between finishing the assignment and submission.  This ended up being our undoing because we found out that it should have been an essay and we had set ours out as a report - as per the exemplar.  I suppose, though, it was for the best because it really was a collaborative effort, rather than an emailing backwards and forwards.  The holidays helped because one of our members is not in Brisbane and she was able to come to Brisbane a few times.

I think I would do it all the same way.  Communication is important and I was lucky because I was in a group of like minded people; we shared the same work ethic.  I have no idea how any other groups fared but my experience was all positive.

At first we entertained the idea of all writing our own profiles, and then meeting in person to do the synthesis. We realised quite quickly that it was going to be very tricky to find times to meet, due to our other life commitments.

We thought that some sort of online environment would work, so we set up a wiki on wetpaint. After deciding on a common set of headings to be used, we each put up our indiviual profiles and then worked out via email who would write each section of the synthesis, and these were then posted to the wiki.

This worked really well for us. Each time one of us added to our sections, or edited anything on the wiki, the other members received an automatically generated email from wetpaint saying that changes had been made. We each had our specific font colour too, which helped us see who was saying what and where. The big plus was that each of us could work on the assignment anytime that suited us. We also used email to keep in contact or ask questions.

Once we were happy with the whole assignment, one brilliant group member offered to put it all into a single document, made it look fantastic and sent it to Mandy.

1.  Decide on headings as a group BEFORE you write your profile.   
This may not always be possible due to differing practice at different sites (we did have to tweak ours a few times), but it REALLY helps to be comparing apples with apples when you come to write the synthesis in sections.  Also makes for a more coherent document when the headings match.

2.  Online composition is FANTASTIC - strongly suggest a wiki   
As previously stated, you can log in at any time that suits you.  Comment, offer feedback, add bits, make suggestions, use the discussion forums etc.  No need to meet in person at all.  Allows best use of available time.  We did have a meeting in Elluminate which was great as it allowed a discussion in real time.  We could ask each other questions to clarify some points from each other's SPP experiences which may not have been totally clear from reading the site profiles.

3.  Allow enough TIME for the icing on the cake.   
There is a lot involved in writing Intro, Conclusion, listing References, and actually preparing the document for publication.  Don't forget to allow time for these tasks as they can add so much to the overall quality.  It also helps if one or more group members can "smooth out the edges" of the document so that it reads as one cohesive piece.  Often, when different members are writing different sections, the different styles are obvious in the finished product.  Best if some editing is done together or if each person gives it a "going over" so that the style can be more uniform.

**4.  Plan the bones (structure) together.**   
Again, you can do this online, but if you share notes about the main points that should be covered in each section, it makes it a lot easier for individuals to start composing their sections.  We began with a table (for each section) which paralleled the 3 sites, and from this developed a list of main points that members thought should be covered, with suggested references.  There is too much to cover in the word limit unless you focus on just a few points that need to be made to best compare / contrast the sites.

We got together very early on to set dates as well.  This was vitally important and because we were relying on each other to meet the deadlines we all worked really hard to meet the timeframes.  We were fortunate enough to meet together in person three times.  This was lucky because one group member lived outside Brisbane.

Deciding on headings for the profiles together was important too, so we felt we were all on the same page.  Many a time we looked at each other and queried whether we were on the right track or not.  We were able to support each other through the "OMG are we on the right track?" stages.

For the synthesis we all took one section each to write up and then got together and spent a solid day trying to put it all together..

For the second assignment one of my group members and I are speaking regularly so we keep on track and set ourselves loose deadlines.  With my report cards and assignment due on the same day I know the next 4 weeks are going to be full on - holidays are the light at the end of the tunnel!

**Communication tips – working in groups and giving feedback**

* Timely communication is important – reply to emails from your group with 24 hours, even if it’s to say you don’t have time.
* Remember that many Hubbers will come and go in terms of engagement – one week a person might be fully engaged and working at optimal rate, the next week they will get nothing done for their study. That’s the nature of being grown-ups and juggling work, family and study!!!!
* Work out a way to communicate in real time – The Room of Requirement, Skype, instant messaging, phone conference call, face-to-face...
* Work out a way to edit documents – wiki, email, Google docs, DropBox...
* A little bit of empathy goes a long way
* Make sure you are all heading for the same goal in terms of marks – if you find that you are at odds in terms of this speak to me
* If you are having any problems feel free to let me know and I can mediate

**The group role in the individual case study**

In terms of the individual case study, the role of your group members is to give formative feedback on structure and content. You may give your feedback in written form (on the discussion board, via private email) or in oral form (via the Room of Requirement, Skype, phone, face-to-face).

* Start with outlining the strengths of your colleague’s work, then move onto what you might do to improve it. Phrase as suggestions rather than orders. Be nice!
* Check that your colleague has a logical structure eg complete paragraphs with topic sentences which flow in a reasoned argument
* Try using the marking rubric to see the strengths and weaknesses of your colleague’s assignment
* The role of the TL and the school library must be explicit throughout
* Comment on what you have learned through reading and giving feedback on your colleague’s work
* Suggest another other aspects to consider